

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 103

INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 823

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

FOR THE SECRETARY, THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS, AND THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, SA, US, USSAEC

SUBJECT: U.S. ECONOMIC COMMISSION OFFICE IN SAUDI ARABIA

1. I WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN FROM THE NEA WEEKLY STATUS
REPORT OF JAN 24 THAT THERE WAS STILL SOME QUESTION IN
WASHINGTON ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE NEW SAUDI-U.S. ECONOMIC
COMMISSION TO BE LOCATED IN RIYADH. I WAS EVEN MORE
SURPRISED TO READ IN A LETTER FROM PARSKY THAT NEITHER
TREASURY NOR ANYONE ELSE QUESTIONED THE ROLE OF THE
AMBASSADOR IN "OVERALL POLICY GUIDANCE" AND THAT THE
DIRECTOR OR HIS DEPUTY WOULD KEEP THE AMBASSADOR
BRIEFED ON IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS, BUT THAT THE
COMMISSION WOULD BE AUTONOMOUS, RATHER LIKE THE
UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SERVICE.

2. I PRESUME PARSKY PRESUMES TOO MUCH. THE STATE
DEPARTMENT IS STILL IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND I THINK PARSKY AND COMPANY SHOULD BE TOLD FLATLY
(NO NEGOTIATIONS) THAT IT WILL REMAIN SO. THERE,
WILL BE NO RPT NO SECOND U.S. EMBASSY FOR ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS IN SAUDI ARABIA. THIS WOULD SURELY BE AS
REPUGNANT TO THE KISSINGER/ROBINSON/ENDERS ECONOMIC
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PAGE 02 JIDDA 00823 041746Z

TEAM AS IT WOULD BE TO ME. IT WOULD ALSO CONFUSE

THE SAUDIS AND IN THE END ERODE THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION ITSELF.

3. THE IDEA OF THE SPECIAL U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONSHIP
ORIGINATED IN THIS EMBASSY AND WITHOUT THE EMBASSY
IT WOULD NEVER HAVE GOTTEN OFF THE GROUND. ASSUMING
WE SURVIVE OUR CURRENT POLITICAL PROBLEMS, THE ECONOMIC
RELATIONSHIP WILL BE BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT PART
OF U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONS AND, IN FACT, ONE OF THE MOST
IMPORTANT PARTS OF U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS. THIS COMMISSION
MUST BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE EMBASSY.

4. THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS THIS COULD BE HANDLED:

A) THE COMMISSION HEAD COULD BE DIRECTLY UNDER THE
ECONOMIC MINISTER (WHEN THE POST IS RAISED TO CLASS
ONE);

B) THE COMMISSION HEAD IN RIYADH COULD BE GIVEN THE
TITLE OF ECONOMIC MINISTER, WITH AT LEAST NOMINAL
CONTROL OVER THE REST OF THE EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC/
COMMERCIAL SECTION;

C) THE COMMISSION HEAD COULD BE GIVEN THE TITLE OF
COUNSELOR FOR DEVELOPMENT AFFAIRS, AND RANK JUST UNDER
THE MINISTER COUNSELOR.

5. IN ALL CASES THE COMMISSION HEAD WOULD BE DIRECTLY
UNDER THE AMBASSADOR AND THE DCM; ALL SUBSTANTIVE RE-
PORTS WOULD BE CLEARED PRIOR TO SUBMISSION.

6. YOU WILL RECALL THAT I HAD BEEN PREPARED TO ACCEPT
A TREASURY ATTACHE BUT THE DEPARTMENT WAS UNWILLING TO
TURN OVER THIS IMPORTANT FUNCTION TO TREASURY. THIS IS
SO MUCH MORE IMPORTANT AND SO BASIC AN ISSUE THAT THERE
CAN NOT BE ANY QUESTION OF YIELDING OR EVEN
COMPROMISE.

7. I WOULD NOT HAVE THOUGHT IT NECESSARY TO RAISE THIS
WITH YOU WERE IT NOT FOR TREASURY'S EXTRAORDINARY ASSUMP-
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PAGE 03 JIDDA 00823 041746Z

TION THAT IT HAS ALREADY WON THE BUREAUCRATIC BATTLE. (TO
SAY I EXPECT YOUR SUPPORT WOULD BE REDUNDANT.)
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